

### Accused Men Use Klan Alibi

Rome, Ga., March 2 (AP)—One after another of ten men on trial for plotting the lashing of seven Negroes at Hooker, Ga., is pleading that red-caped and hooded Ku Klux Klansmen alone are to blame for the savage deeds. Three of the defendants in U.S. district court have gone so far as to assert in their testimony that instead of conniving with the Klan they themselves were victims of its coercion and arrogance. One was Dade County Sher-

iff John W. Lynch who said yesterday a masked man rammed what "felt like a gun" in his back and forced him to turn over two of the Negroes to robed lash-wielders. Deputy Sheriff John Bleckley, also a defendant, followed his superior to the stand and gave similar testimony. A third defendant, 28-year-old Robert Keener of Trenton, Ga., admitted he drove the seven Negroes in his station wagon from the home of Mamie Clay, also a Negro, to the flogging scene the night of April 2. Keener testified he did so, however, only because a Klansman reached under his robe as if he were going to draw a gun.

### Morse Declines Thomas Debate

Portland, Ore., March 2 (AP)—Norman Thomas, senior spokesman for the American Socialist party, offered to debate the Columbia Valley Administration proposal with Sen. Wayne Morse, R., Ore., but Morse today declined the invitation. Morse said the Thomas invitation "only goes to show that those who favor the establishment of a state economy in America are using CVA as one of the devices for accomplishing their socialistic objectives." Thomas challenged Morse to the debate while here for a lecture appearance Tuesday night.

"CVA is not an issue in my primary campaign because most of us in the republican party are opposed to it," Morse said. "It may become an issue in the general election next fall if my democratic opponent advocates it." "During my primary campaign I shall devote my public discussions to those problems which are an issue in that campaign and therefore I have no intention of taking the time to carry on a public discussion with Norman Thomas on one of his pet state economy proposals." Thomas suggested to a Portland audience that the United States could offer to abandon heavy armaments in the interest of world peace provided other nations followed suit.

### Finland's President Begins New Term

Helsinki, Finland, March 2 (AP)—President Juho Paasikivi began his second term of office Wednesday by promising to work for "good and trustful relations, especially between Finland and the Soviet Union." The 79-year-old statesman was sworn into office with the dark shadow of Russian political pressure marring the inauguration ceremonies. Russia yesterday handed Finland a note reiterating previous demands for the extradition of some 300 alleged Soviet war criminals.



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